

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACTIVITY: The main business or undertaking engaged in by an individual, alone or with others. Activities include: work and work-related, school, shopping, personal business, preparing a meal, cleaning the home, athletics/exercise, visiting, etc. Activities have the following associated attributes: type, duration, start time, end time, location, and mode of travel to get to the activity location (in the case of an activity that takes place at a location that is different from the previous activity). Participation in activities at different locations is the underlying reason for trip-making. Trip purpose is associated with the main activity type at the destination, for those activities requiring a trip.

ADVANCE LETTER: A letter sent to a sample member (household or person) via mail in advance of the interviewer's attempt to contact the member. An advance letter is meant to "warm-up" the member to the forthcoming call from the interviewer.

CALLBACKS: The re-approach of a sample member after previous contact attempts have been unsuccessful. Callbacks reduce the likelihood of nonresponse error by improving the contact rate.

CALLING PROTOCOL: A calling schedule for contacting sample members. Most calling protocols take into account the outcomes and times of previous calls in an attempt to improve the chances of reaching sample members.

COGNITIVE INTERVIEW: A technique for developing survey questionnaires that focuses on the thought processes respondents go through as they arrive at answers to survey questions. In a cognitive interview, respondents are asked to think out loud as they answer draft survey questions. They may also be asked to respond to a number of follow-up probes to reveal how they arrived at their answers and whether the content or wording of the items should be improved.

COMPUTER ASSISTED PERSONAL INTERVIEWING (CAPI): Face-to-face interviewing performed with the assistance of a computer. In a CAPI interview, the interviewer reads the questionnaire items from a computer screen and records the respondent's answers by entering them into the computer. CAPI systems may also form and manage the sample, display the introductory script, control the wording of the items, check for internal consistency among the respondent's answers, and perform any number of other operations associated with the collection or management of the data.

COMPUTER ASSISTED TELEPHONE INTERVIEWING (CATI): Telephone interviewing performed with the assistance of a computer. CATI systems are similar to CAPI systems in that the questionnaire items are displayed on line and the interviewer enters the respondent's answers with the keyboard or mouse. Most CATI systems perform

other operations related to the management or collection of data by telephone. They may, for example, supply the interviewers with instructions, manage the sampling pool, schedule call attempts, record the outcomes of the calling effort, and/or monitor the progress of the interviewers.

CONVERTING: Recontacting initial refusals one or more times in an attempt to persuade them to participate in the survey.

CRITICAL ITEMS: A set of questions that must be completed by the sample member to classify the case as a respondent. The set typically includes all items that are essential to accomplishing the major goals of the survey.

DISPOSITION CODE: A code assigned to each case (member) in the sample that records the most recent or final outcome (e.g., ring-no-answer, nonworking number, respondent refusal, etc.) of the data collection effort. Disposition codes are used to track the status of each sample member, to monitor and manage the field effort, and to compute response rates.

ELIGIBLE UNITS (ELIGIBLES): Sample units who are eligible to participate in the survey because they are part of the target population.

FIELD PERIOD: The time period during which data are collected from sample members.

HOUSEHOLD: The U.S. Bureau of the Census defines a household as all persons who occupy the same housing unit. A household may consist of a family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements.

HOUSING UNIT: The U.S. Bureau of the Census defines a housing unit as a house, apartment, mobile home, group of rooms, or single room that is occupied (or if vacant, is intended for occupancy) as separate living quarters. To qualify as a housing unit, the occupants must live and eat separately from other persons in the building and have direct access to their unit from the outside of the building or through a common hall.

IMPUTATION: A statistical or logical technique by which missing data are inferred from other information provided by the respondent and/or other respondents.

INCENTIVE: A monetary or nonmonetary gift or payment offered to sample members in an effort to gain their cooperation.

INELIGIBLE UNITS (INELIGIBLES): Sample units who are not qualified to participate in a survey because they do not belong to the target population.

ITEM NONRESPONSE (MISSING DATA): The failure to obtain a specific piece of data from a responding member of the sample.

LANGUAGE BARRIERS: Language difficulties that prevent or hinder a sample member from participating in a survey. Such difficulties typically arise when the native language of a sample member is something other than the language(s) used in the survey.

LOGICAL IMPUTATION/EDITING: Techniques by which missing data are logically (rather than statistically) deduced from known information about the respondent.

MISSING DATA: See *item nonresponse*.

NONRESPONSE: Failure of the survey to obtain the desired information from eligible sample members.

NONRESPONSE WEIGHTING: Postsampling statistical adjustment (weighting) to partially compensate for possible nonresponse error. Nonresponse weighting is different from the postsampling weighting that is routinely performed to adjust for unequal probabilities of selection.

NONWORKING NUMBER: A telephone number that has not been assigned to a unit by the telephone company.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION: A survey question that asks the respondent to phrase the answer in his or her own words.

PAPER-AND-PENCIL INTERVIEWING (PAPI): An interview in which the interviewer reads the questions from a printed questionnaire and records the answers directly onto the questionnaire.

POSTSTRATIFICATION: When case weights are adjusted to agree with independent estimates of population totals. Poststratification compensates for differences between the distribution of characteristics in the sample and the distribution of characteristics in the target population.

PRETEST (PILOT TEST): A relatively small number of practice interviews used to test and refine the survey materials and/or the field procedures before the conduct of the main survey.

PROXY: Someone other than the selected sample member who answers survey questions on behalf of that member.

RANDOM DIGIT DIALING (RDD): Techniques that form samples by adding random digits to

the telephone prefixes that fall within the sampling area so as to include listed (published) and unlisted numbers in the sample.

REFUSALS: Sample members who refuse to participate in the screening or main data collection phase of a survey.

RESPONDENT RULES (RESPONDENT SELECTION): Rules that are used by the interviewers to choose a respondent from all eligible members within a sampling unit.

RESPONSE RATE: A measure of a survey's level of success in obtaining measurements for all eligible units in the sample; the number of respondents divided by the total number of eligible units in the sample.

RESULT CODE: See *disposition code*.

SAMPLING FRAME: A list of units that includes the target population from which the survey sample is drawn.

SCREENING INTERVIEW: A preliminary interview used to determine the eligibility of sample members. Sample members who meet the eligibility requirements are often recruited for more detailed data collection during this interview.

SELF-ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE: A questionnaire that is completed by the sample member without the assistance of an interviewer. Respondents to self-administered questionnaires are asked to read the questions and record the answers on their own.

STATISTICAL IMPUTATION: Statistical technique by which missing data for questions are inferred from information provided by the respondent and/or other respondents. In hot deck imputation, data are taken from another case (the donor) similar to the case with the missing data. In regression-based imputation, the imputed value is predicted from other information provided by the same case.

STRATIFICATION: Process in which units with similar characteristics are divided into groups called strata before the sampling process begins. Each unit is assigned to one and only one stratum based on prior knowledge about the unit. Separate samples are then selected within each stratum.

STRATIFIED SAMPLE: The sample that is formed when independent random samples are selected from each stratum (or cell) of a stratified sampling design. (Also see *stratification*.)

TARGET POPULATION: The finite population the survey intends to cover.

TERMINATIONS/BREAKOFFS: Sample members who begin but terminate a interview before they provide enough information to be classified as respondents.

TRIP: One-way travel from one address (place) to another by any means of transportation (e.g., private motor vehicle, public transportation, bicycle, or walking). When the travel includes more than one destination and the travel time between destinations exceeds five minutes, or the purpose for travel to one location differs from that of the other, the travel between locations is counted as a separate trip.

UNIT NONRESPONSE: The failure to obtain questionnaires or data collection forms from an eligible sample member.

WEIGHTED RESPONSE RATE: A response rate that is calculated using the inverse of the selection probabilities as the weight. The weighted response rate is an estimate of the proportion of the target population represented by the respondents to the survey.

WORKING RESIDENTIAL NUMBER (WRN): Telephone numbers that have been assigned to residential housing units by the telephone company.

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